

GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS

NCTE DISCUSSION

June 10, 2010

To assure we are on track to provide highly effective educators (teachers and leaders) for all students requires that we revisit systems for recruitment, preparation, certification, support, evaluation and accountability. Following is a list of some of the challenges/opportunities identified by the Nebraska State Board of Education – and reinforced in national discussions:

- ✓ **How do we assure that all educators (teachers and principals) are prepared as well as our best educators (consistency across institutions and within institutions)?**
- ✓ **How can we increase the ‘rigor’ of educator preparation programs to address the increasing demands of today’s classrooms?**
- ✓ **How do we increase the pipeline of excellent educators?**
- ✓ **How do we publicly document that all new-to-the-profession teachers have strong content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge/skill?**
- ✓ **As we begin to increase the use of student growth and achievement data to determine ‘effective schools’, it will also be linked to teachers and teacher preparation institutions. Are we ready for this?**
- ✓ **Are we keeping pace with curriculum changes such as higher math/science expectations in elementary grades?**

In response to these challenges, the following questions are being proposed for discussion during the June, 2010 Nebraska Council on Teacher Education meeting. The ‘discussion starter’ points included with each question are provided only as suggestions and are not intended to guide or limit the group’s discussion.

1. What are the key issues/challenges in today’s learning environments (classrooms) that can be addressed in teacher preparation? What are strategies and changes that will serve to address those issues/challenges?

Possible discussion starters:

- *Common core standards and other content expectations.*
- *Achievement gaps.*
- *Student diversity.*
- *Student assessment and the implications of those assessments (linked to teachers and teacher preparation institutions).*
- *Calls for increased field experiences – balanced with content and professional education expectations.*
- *What can/must we do better?*

1a. What are the key issues/challenges in today's learning environments (classrooms) that can be addressed in school leader (principal) preparation programs? What are strategies and changes that will serve to address those issues/challenges?

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2. Accountability is a common theme in national and state discussions. Specifically, how do we measure and document that Nebraska teacher education programs are consistently rigorous and producing effective teachers across all 17 institutions and within the programs in each institution? How can we be sure that all educators are as well prepared as the best educators?

Possible discussion starters:

- *How does Nebraska define a highly effective teacher?*
- *What indicators should be available to stakeholders to document effectiveness?*
- *How do we document that candidates have adequate content and pedagogical knowledge?*
- *How do we define a high performing teacher preparation program? How is a low performing teacher preparation institution defined?*
- *What can/must we do better?*

3. How do we increase, support, and retain a supply of excellent teachers and leaders?

Possible discussion starters:

- *Nontraditional/alternative preparation pathways.*
- *New delivery systems (virtual/online).*
- *Professional growth/induction/mentoring.*
- *What components are non-negotiable for educator preparation and for recommendation for a Nebraska certificate? What can/should change?*
- *How do we address portability/reciprocity for teachers crossing state lines?*
- *What can/must we do better?*

<p>4. How can Nebraska’s educator certification, recertification, professional development and evaluation practices change to strengthen and support educators (ultimately leading to enhanced student growth and achievement)?</p>

Possible discussion starters:

- *Mentoring and induction.*
- *What partnerships exist – or should exist to fully support educator development and growth across the career life of the educator? What are the roles of preparation programs and the schools in educator development?*
- *What can/must we do better?*
- *Discussions are moving us toward a system of educator evaluation that will have a basis in professional teacher/principal standards. Factors embedded in the evaluation will include professional development plans/achievement and student growth. What are key considerations for using professional growth as a component for recertification? What recommendations would you make for changing Nebraska’s certification processes?*